

August 16, 1999

6522 '99 AUG 18 P1:59

Leah Weaver
1208 W. Franklin #7
Minneapolis, MN 55405

Dockets Management Branch
Food & Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane, Rm. 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

Dear Sir or Madam:

I am writing regarding docket nos. 98N-1230, 96P-0418, and 97P-0197. The most effective and direct way to reduce salmonella in eggs would be to eliminate the practice of forced molting.

Every year, when egg production drops, approximately 195 million hens in North America endure a bizarre torment called forced molting. This cruel practice throws the hens' systems into collapse, stressing and shocking their worn-out bodies into laying one more batch of eggs before being sent to slaughter. The frightened birds are deprived of food for up to two weeks, water is restricted for up to eight weeks and they are kept in pitch dark for weeks on end. As a result, hundreds of thousands die while those who survive grow weak, shed all their feathers, and lose up to 35 percent of their body weight. Forced molting also weakens hens' bones, resulting in fragile, broken limbs.

Recent research, including a study conducted by U.S. government scientists, shows that forced molting increases the frequency and severity of *Salmonella enteritidis* among hens. The stressful conditions weaken their immune systems so badly that they become prone to disease and salmonella infections. The result is sick birds and contaminated eggs.

Putting warning labels on egg cartons and regulating egg refrigeration temperatures is not enough. Please ban the practice of induced molting across the country.

Sincerely,

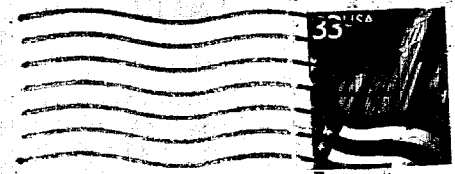


Leah Weaver

96P-0418

C 287

Leah Weaver
1208 W. Franklin *7
Mpls, MN 55405



Dockets Management Branch (HFA-305)
Food & Drug Administration
5630 Fishers Lane, Rm. 1061
Rockville, MD 20852

20857/0001



CROSS FILE SHEET

File Number: 98N-1230/ C 287

See File Number: 97P-0197/ C 288
96P-0418/ C 287